DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Sir, I would like to ask a specific question and I expect from the Minister a specific answer. What is the total quantum of Central quota to the Southern region and on what criteria this quota has been fixed? What is the total quantum of power given to the State of Andhra Pradesh?

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI: Sir, I give only specific answers. I would not give vague answers. I have always been givin;; specific answers. As regards allocation from the Central quota, we make these allocations based on the Gagdil formula and energy consumption. While doing this, we take into consideration factors such as the peak and normal level energy situation, energy shortages, etc. So, we do the allocation on this basis from the Central quota. There is no fixed criteria that one State has to be given 40% and some other State 30%. It depends on the States' priorities and such aspects as drought conditions or flood conditions, etc. Depending on all these aspects, the allocation varies. Recently, basing on the industrial load and energy consumption, we increased it in Karnataka. Based on the representation from the Government of Kerala and the demand by the hon. Member who has just spoken, we propose to enhance the quota for Kerala also. The 15% Central allocation is primarily based on the Gadgil formula. The latest revision of allocation was made and with effect from 10.2.1997, Andhra Pradesh would get 30%, Karnataka would get 40%, Kerala would get 27% and Tamil Nadu would get 3%. I think this is effective from 10.2.1997. From time to time, we review the position. Recently, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has submitted proposals for enhancement of the energy quota. I think wc have to examine these proposals taking into account the total energy requirements of the entire southern region.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Sir, the hon. Minister has listed some names of the States where there are power shortages in reply to the first part of the main Question. This was estimated during the period between April, 96 and January, 97. In this list, Bihar was put in the second position with an energy shortage of 27.6%. But in the allocations made to be effective from 1.1.97, I don't find Bihar's name in it. I am rather surprised by this omission. I would like to mention the fact that Bihar produce 40% of the total coal production in this country. Also, when the DVC was being constructed, Bihar had lost a large tract of its land. And from this project, we arc not getting enough energy. We produce a large part of the total coal production and distribute it to other States. Then, why is it that Bihar is deprived of sufficient power? Why is it that Bihar is not being given sufficient power from the Central quota?

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI: Sir, the question pertains to southern region.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: No, Sir. I beg to differ with his contention. The first part of his answer lists Bihar.

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI: Sir, as far as Bihar is concerned, their total requirement is 3,085.9 MW. Bihar is actually getting more than its entitlement. It is getting 4,545.9 MW. This is for information of the hon. Member. This Government has not been neglecting Bihar or any other State. It is decided on the basis of their requirements. We also monitor it from time to time and examine each case. So, wc are not neglecting any State.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Question No. 185.

Hinduja's Power Plant at Vizag

*185. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what are the salient features of the Hinduja's Power Plant at Vizag;

(b) whether it has been approved;

(c) whether the counter guarantee has also been given to the Company;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and by when it is proposed to be finally approved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The Visakhapatnam Thermal Power Project consists of the construction and operation of a two-unit, 1040 MW coal-fired power station to be located near Visakhapatnam in the State of Andhra Pradesh. The project is being jointly developed by the Hinduja group and National Power of United Kingdom, and will be implemented through a joint venture company, M/s Hinduja National Power Corporation Ltd. (HNPCL). The project has been accorded techno-cconomic clearance of the Central Electricity Authority on 25.7.1996, subject to certain conditions at an estimated completion cost of US$ 943.75 million + Rs. 1234.993 crores.

(c) and (d) Government of India's counter guarantee in respect of the project has not been issued. The same can only be considered after the Power Purchase Agreement between M/s HNPCL and Andhra Pradesh State Electricity Board is finalised, and the other necessary conditions fulfilled.

SHRI AMAR SINGH: Sir, since when has the matter been hanging fire and what are the reasons thereof? Has the Coal India Ltd. agreed to supply wast-coal of good quality for the project? if so, I would like to know the details thereof. At what rate has it been agreed? And if it has not been agreed to, what are the reasons thereof? What about transportation of coal on time? Has the Railway Ministry agreed and, if not, what are the reasons thereof? The company has agreed to pay even 25% more freight charges. Has the tripartite agreement since been signed and, if so, when? By what time is the project likely to be finally cleared?

MR. CHAIRMAN: How many questions in one?

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI: Sir, there are two or three things on which the two Ministers have different opinions. Now a Cabinet sub-committee has been constituted by the hon. Prime Minister. The Power Purchase Agreement has been examined by the Government of India. In oidcr to finalise the counter-guarantee and other things, the PPA requires some modifications. As you know, Sir, PPA is a complex document. It runs into hundreds of pages and its detailed examination is very necessary. So, it will Jake time. But a final decision on this issue is expected to be taken shortly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary, please.

SHRI AMAR SINGH: No more questions, Sir.

डा. वाई लक्ष्मी प्रसाद : थैक्यू वेरी मच सर। चूंकि विशाखापटटनम मेरे प्रान्त में है और मैं वहीं से यहां आया हूं। इस प्रोजेक्ट को शुरू करने की बात पिछले चार सालों से हो रही है। इसलिए मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से और इस सरकार से पूछना चाहता हूं कि इस प्रोजेक्ट के प्रति भारत सरकार सीरियस है या नहीं है और इसको शुरू करेगी या नहीं करेगी?

सर, मेरा दूसरा सवाल है कि आदरणीय प्रधान मंत्री जी इस सदन में हैं। पिछले दो महीनों से हमारे विशाखापट्टनम और आन्ध्र प्रदेश के अखबारों मे यह खबर छप रही है कि प्रधान मंत्री जी विशाखापट्टनम पधारने वाले हैं और सिंहाद्रि पावर प्रोजेक्ट का शिलान्यास करने वाले हैं। मैं आपके माध्यम से प्रधान मंत्री जी से प्रार्थना करता हूं कि उनका शुभागमन हमारे विशाखापट्टनम में कब होगा? और वे इस प्रोजेक्ट का शितान्यास कब करेंगे?

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI: Sir, this project has been pending for the last four years and, as you know, this Government came into power only nine months ago. This Government is taking a lot of initiatives and we are delegating more and more powers to the States. We recently discussed this project in the subcommittee. Only the day before yesterday, we discussed it in the Cabinet also. A sub-committee has been constituted. After finalisation of the PPA and resolution of differences between the two Ministries, this will be finalised at the earliest. Sir, this Government is committed to generation, transmission and distribution of power.

DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Sir, I want to have a specific clarification. When are they going to start it and how much time will they take?

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI: Sir, after the approval of the Cabinet, we want to commence the project.

PROF. RAM KAPSE: Hon. Chairman, Sir, the Prime Minister has announced that hereafter they will not clear new private projects. So, what is the position about this project? Do you consider it for clearnance? I would also like to ask whether an increase in the efficiency of the power houses could also help or would you like to increase the efficiency by increasing the number of plants.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Enquiry into working of Oil Selection Boards

*182. SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA:
DR. SHRIKANT RAM-CHANDRA JICKHAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to make a high level enquiry into the working of Oil Selection Boards (OSBs) functioning for the last five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have received compalints of corruption against the OSBs; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to enquire into those complaints

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Docs not arise

(c) Complaints have been received against the selections made by some of the Oil Selection Boards including their alleged indulgence in irregularities and malpractices.

(d) Tenure of the Chairman and the Members of such Boards had been terminated by Government owing to their unsatisfactory performance. A Public Interest Litigation has already been filed in the High Court of Delhi. The complaints/ allegations are being looked into by the Court and the matter is subjudice. Operation of the OSBs is presently in abeyance.

Oil and gas reserves in Mahanadi Basin

*186. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be plcasd to state:

(a) when the last assessment of oil and natural gas reserves in the Mahanadi Basin in Orissa was made;

(b) the details of the findings thereof; and

(c) the reasons why exploration of oil or natural gas has not been started in the river basin.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) During the period 1978-90 Oil